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Recommendation by the Scientific Council
to the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Global Warming and Migratory Species

1. The Scientific Council has been receiving from the conservation community growing indications of concern about the issue of global warming and how it may affect migratory species.

2. To put the situation in perspective some short salient facts about climate change have been quoted below, extracted from the book: *Climate Change 1995.Impacts, Adaptations and Mitigation of Climate Change: Scientific-Technical Analyses*. This book is a contribution of Working Group II, to the Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) created by the World Meteorological Organization and UNEP, and at present the most reliable source of information available.

"Earth climate has remained relatively stable (global temperature changes of less than 1° C over a century) during the last 10,000 years ... Now however, society faces potentially rapid changes in future climate because of human activities, that alter the atmosphere's composition and change the Earth's radiation balance." (pp 21)

"Climate models taking into account greenhouse gases and aerosols predict that global mean surface temperature could rise by about 1 to 3.5° C by 2100 ... These projected global-average temperature changes would be greater that recent natural fluctuations and would occur at a rate significantly faster than any since the last ice age more than 10,000 years ago. High latitudes are projected to warm more than the global average. The reliability of regional projections remain low. " (pp. 22)

"The composition and geographic distribution of many ecosystems will shift as individual species respond to changes in climate; there will likely be reductions in biological diversity and in the goods and services that ecosystems provide to society. Some ecological systems may not reach a new equilibrium for several centuries after the climate achieves a new balance." (pp 5)

3. In regard to activities related to migratory species and climate change, the Scientific Council is aware of the following actions that some organizations are taking:

- The International Whaling Commission has created a working group to evaluate recent changes in migratory routes of cetaceans, probably linked with sea temperature changes, eventually related to climate change.

- BirdLife International and WWF International are organizing a *Workshop on the impacts of Climate Change on Flora and Fauna*, to be conducted tentatively in September-October 1997 and have invited CMS to participate.

- The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, encouraged the Climate Change Secretariat to cooperate with the CMS Secretariat, as well as other conventions, to investigate what actions could be taken to improve the understanding of interrelations between Conventions, as a basis for improved policymaking.

- WWF USA has launched a campaign about climate change and bird migration.

4. Biodiversity will be affected by global warming and a growing number of technical papers also address this issue, but still there is no agreement on the magnitude and seriousness of this problem and how animals and plants will be affected.

5. In relation to migratory species the situation is even more unclear, but is evident that we are facing a climate change in our world and these species will be affected.

6. For example, marine turtle populations which breed on low sand islands, such as coral cays are particularly threatened by rise in sea level.

7. The Scientific Council recommends that:

- The CMS cooperate with bodies of other conventions and organizations, including the International Whaling Commission, BirdLife International and WWF International

- The CMS should participate in the *Workshop on the impacts of Climate Change on Flora and Fauna* being organized by BirdLife International and WWF International. A Councillor should be invited to attend and report back to the Council via the Secretariat,